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ABSTRACT

This study examined the characteristics of effective teachers as they were perceived by students at different educational levels and maturity, investigating whether the perceived characteristics changed with maturity level. A group of 108 high school students, 109 college freshmen in developmental studies, and 104 college seniors in education classes participated. The high school students and college freshmen were predominantly African American, and the college seniors were predominantly white. Students completed a survey that was anonymous but asked for age, gender, race, and grade level. The survey asked questions about the characteristics, methodology, and effectiveness of their teachers in general. Students had to rate teacher characteristics, methodology, and effectiveness on a scale of very important to not important. Some of the topics included number of outside assignments, number of tests taken, difficulty of tests, class discussions, volume/clarity of teacher's voice, humor in the classroom, calling on students, enthusiasm of instructor, teacher knowledge, use of visual aids, working with other students in groups, and friendliness. Researchers tallied the responses of each and made comparisons between the groups. The paper presents a comparison of the responses of the groups. The teacher survey is appended. (SM)

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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

A survey was conducted among students at three different educational levels. These levels included high school students, college freshmen in developmental studies, and college seniors enrolled in education classes. The survey asked questions regarding the characteristics, methodology, and effectiveness of their teachers in general. The responses of each group were tallied, and comparisons were made among the groups. The results were analyzed and presented.

The objectives of the survey were to recognize the characteristics of effective teachers that were perceived by students at different educational levels and maturity, and to determine if these perceived characteristics of effective teachers changed with the maturity level of the student. An additional goal was to utilize teaching strategies indicated by the survey for appropriate age levels in order to increase teacher effectiveness.

The survey was anonymous, but age, gender, race, and grade level were disclosed. The sample included 108 high school students, 109 developmental college freshmen, and 104 college seniors in education classes.

Group one was composed of high school students who attended Maplewood High School in Nashville, Tennessee. The median age was 16. The largest ethnic groups were 71.3% African-American and 19.4% Caucasian. Other races included Asian, Hispanic, and Indian. Group one consisted of 60.2% females and 38.9% males.

Group two was composed of developmental college students who attended Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee. The median age was 19. They were predominantly African-American in race with 94.5% . There were 2.8 % Caucasian, and 2.8 % Asian that completed the group. The gender grouping was 60.6% female and 37.6% male.

Group three consisted of senior college students and graduate students who were enrolled in education classes at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The median age was 23. The predominant races were 76.0% Caucasian and 14.4% African-American. The gender grouping was 59.6 % female and 38.5% male.

The Likert scale measured the responses ranging from very efficient, efficient, inefficient, somewhat efficient or very important, important, somewhat important, not important. The questions regarded methodology of instruction and personal interaction of the teacher with the students. A comparison of the responses of the groups was analyzed and presented.

EFFECTIVE TEACHER SURVEY
(by percent)

Groups		Very Important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important	Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Amount I learn in the course is	1	47.2	38.9	12.0	1.9	17.12	6	.00885*
	2	67.6	26.9	4.6	.9			
	3	67.3	29.8	2.9	0			
Number of outside assignments	1	14.8	48.1	29.6	7.4	37.37	6	.00000*
	2	34.3	59.3	5.6	.9			
	3	22.1	41.3	30.8	5.8			
Number of tests taken	1	35.5	31.8	24.3	8.4	64.81	6	.00000*
	2	59.6	36.7	2.8	.9			
	3	17.0	35.0	39.0	10.0			
Assignment of a major paper or project	1	50.0	35.2	11.1	3.7	15.26	6	.01830
	2	52.3	33.6	5.6	8.4			
	3	38.5	35.6	21.2	4.8			
Difficulty of the tests	1	25.2	39.3	23.4	12.1	24.78	6	.00037*
	2	35.8	50.5	11.0	2.8			
	3	14.7	52.9	25.5	6.9			
Study guides provided before tests	1	53.4	35.9	8.7	1.9	14.08	6	.02869
	2	69.4	24.1	5.6	.9			
	3	52.9	27.5	17.69	2.0			
Class discussions are	1	35.8	47.2	10.4	6.6	35.87	6	.00000*
	2	59.6	34.9	4.6	.9			
	3	72.1	24.0	3.8	0			
Volume/clarity of instructor's voice	1	39.8	38.9	13.0	8.3	48.16	6	.00000*
	2	78.0	18.3	2.8	.9			
	3	69.2	27.9	2.9	0			
Humor in the classroom	1	37.0	24.1	25.0	13.9	36.61	6	.00000*
	2	25.9	27.8	29.6	16.7			
	3	51.0	38.5	8.7	1.9			
Calling on students	1	7.5	34.0	39.6	18.9	17.36	6	.00803*
	2	26.6	30.3	34.9	8.3			
	3	20.6	31.4	38.2	9.8			
Getting course information without reading	1	26.2	39.3	23.4	11.2	11.02	6	.08770
	2	25.9	46.3	22.2	5.6			
	3	38.2	42.2	16.7	2.9			
Enthusiasm of he instructor	1	38.7	40.6	17.0	3.8	49.31	6	.00000*
	2	63.3	29.4	6.4	.9			
	3	81.6	18.4	0	0			
Teacher who is knowledgeable	1	63.2	28.3	5.7	2.8	28.44	6	.00008*
	2	79.8	16.5	3.7	0			
	3	91.3	8.7	0	0			
Using visual aids and technology	1	30.8	43.9	20.6	4.7	8.21	6	.22311
	2	45.9	34.9	16.5	2.8			
	3	44.2	41.3	12.5	1.9			
Instructor inspiring me to think deeply	1	42.1	37.4	17.8	2.8	30.20	6	.00004*
	2	64.2	33.0	2.8	0			
	3	68.3	25.0	6.7	0			
Instructor moving and gesturing	1	15.1	25.5	31.1	28.3	49.62	6	.00000*
	2	22.9	45.0	20.2	11.9			
	3	36.5	47.1	13.5	2.9			
Working with other students in groups	1	27.4	42.5	20.8	9.4	7.85	6	.24905
	2	36.1	36.5	21.3	1.9			
	3	37.5	40.7	20.2	5.8			
Parent/teacher communication	1	24.3	37.4	22.4	15.9	43.96	6	.00000*
	2	37.6	36.7	18.3	7.3			
	3	60.6	33.7	4.8	1.0			
Friendliness of instructor	1	37.4	34.6	20.6	7.5	31.39	6	.00002*
	2	55.0	33.0	6.4	5.5			
	3	66.3	28.8	4.8	0			

Group 1 represents high school students
Group 2 represents college freshmen
Group 3 represents college seniors
*Significant difference at the .01 alpha level

EFFECTIVE TEACHER SURVEY – PART 2

(by percent)

	Yes	No	Does Not Matter
Having teacher who shares information about their background and family	29.0 30.3 68.9	10.3 20.2 3.9	60.7 49.5 27.2
Having students share information about their background and family	31.1 38.9 72.3	18.9 17.6 2.0	50.0 43.5 25.7
Do you prefer a teacher of your own ethnicity?	22.2 28.4 9.7		77.7 71.6 90.2

	Male	Female	Does Not Matter
Which do you prefer for a teacher?	14.8 2.8 2.0	21.3 14.7 14.7	63.9 82.6 83.3

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE (by percent)

Group	Mean	Median	Mode
1	15.9	16	15
2	20.0	19	19
3	25.3	23	22

GENDER (by percent)

Groups	Female	Male
1	60.2	38.9
2	60.6	37.6
3	59.6	38.5

RACE (by percent)

Groups	African-American	Caucasian	Asian	Hispanic	Indian
1	71.3	19.4	3.7	.9	.9
2	94.5	2.8	2.8	0	0
3	14.4	76.0	0	1.0	0

GRADE IN COURSE (by percent)

Groups	A	B	C	Below 70
1	23.1	32.4	15.7	5.6
2	9.2	33.9	28.4	.9
3	62.5	17.3	3.8	0

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TEACHER? (by percent)

Groups	Yes	No	Maybe
1	5.6	75.0	19.4
2	12.8	58.7	27.5
3	86.5	5.8	6.7

Group 1 represents high school students
Group 2 represents college freshmen
Group 3 represents college seniors

EFFECTIVE TEACHER SURVEY

Please complete this information :
AGE____ GENDER__RACE_____(Circle) Freshman, Soph., Junior, Senior, Graduate

State your approximate current grade in this class._____

CIRCLE ONE:
In general, your teachers have been:
VERY EFFICIENT, EFFICIENT, INEFFICIENT, SOMEWHAT EFFICIENT.

I am interested in becoming a teacher. YES NO MAYBE

Respond to these questions regarding the effectiveness of any teacher.

1. The amount I learn in the course is
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

2. The number of outside assignments required in the course is
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

3. The number of tests taken in the course is _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

4. An assignment of a major paper or project is _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

5. The difficulty of the tests is _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

6. Study guides provided before tests are _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

7. Class discussions are _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

8. The instructor speaking in a loud and clear voice is _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

9. Humor in the classroom is _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

10. Calling on students or having students go to the board is _____.
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

11. Getting course information from class without having to read the textbook is _____
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

12. The enthusiasm of the instructor about the course is _____
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

13. A teacher who is knowledgeable in the subject area is _____
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

14. Using visual aids and technology are _____
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

15. The instructor inspiring me to think deeply about the subject is _____
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

16. The instructor moving around the room and gesturing is _____
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

17. In the classroom, working with other students in group activities is _____
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

18. In the high school setting, communication between parents and teachers is
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

19. The friendliness of the instructor is
VERY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT

20. Having a teacher that shares personal information about his background and family helps students learn easily. YES NO DOES NOT MATTER

21 . Having students share information about their own backgrounds with teachers helps students learn easily.
YES NO DOES NOT MATTER

22. Which do you prefer for a teacher?
MALE FEMALE DOES NOT MATTER

23. Do you prefer a teacher of your own ethnicity?
YES DOES NOT MATTER

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